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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2008

In Today's Papers

Constitutional Court Releases Decision on the AKP Closure Case
All papers: The Constitutional Court released its written decision in the AKP closure case yesterday. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that the Court determined that the AKP proved itself to be the focal point of anti-secular acts through 30 different actions. Mainstream Hurriyet notes that when PM Erdogan's commented, "let's suppose the headscarf is a political symbol" such quotes were used as proof of anti-secular sentiments. Among the reasons for the AKP being described as the focal point of anti-secular acts were "efforts to lower the age of students who may attend Quran courses, anti-secular statements made by PM Erdogan and former Parliament speaker Bulent Arinc, and the activities of education Minister Huseyin Celik." The Constitutional Court decided not to close the AKP for various reasons including efforts exerted for EU membership, laws improving the status of non-Muslim minorities, the abolishment of the death penalty and reforms for democratization including positive steps for women's rights.

Meanwhile, today's papers report that PM Erdogan reacted to the Constitutional Court's ruling on the headscarf and said "the Court ignored the powers of the Parliament. The Constitutional Court is not above the Constitution. We recognize no power above the national will."

Editorial Commentary on the Constitutional Court Decisions

Taha Akyol wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "The Constitutional Court's logical decision on the AKP closure case followed the Court's logical verdict on the Headscarf ban. In every democracy, either all or the majority of the Constitutional Court members are elected by the parliament from the judiciary, administration or from the universities. In Turkey, staffing sources for the Constitutional Court are rather limited. If the court composition is enriched in a country, then, the constitutional judiciary will distance itself from the oligarchic structure and its democratic lawfulness will be strengthened. It should be like this in Turkey as well but, not now! I am calling on Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Bahceli: Turkey's priority for now is terror and the economy. Taking

valuable time to limit the Constitutional Court's authority at a time like this will cause serious problems and eliminate all the peace left in this country."

Nazli Ilicak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Following the Constitutional Court decision on the headscarf ban, at least for the time being, the government has become unable to take any further steps on the issue. The solution is to create new constitution, but the AKP government will not exert any efforts on this issue now. People will understand in time that banning parties will not bring any solution. I hope when elections come again, the Turkish public will remember the role of the CHP in all of these banning cases. Because of the CHP's efforts, the headscarf issue has remained unsolved. Moreover, the reputation of the parliament was damaged and the Constitutional Court declared its guardianship over the Turkish Parliament."

Oktay Eksi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "PM Erdogan continued his criticisms against the Constitutional Court yesterday. Isn't there anyone close to the PM with some judicial background? PM Erdogan should be advised on judicial issues and should be reminded that the first rule for a democratic state is to respect the judiciary. Led by the PM, the AKP continues their fight with Constitutional principles. Here is a friendly piece of advice for the AKP - you are just wasting your time are criticizing the judiciary. Don't forget that the judiciary's slap is always very hard."

Next Ergenekon Hearing to be Held on October 27
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Zaman, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet and others:
The second session of the Ergenekon trial took place yesterday under

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tight security. Lawyers, journalists and the audience were allowed in from separate entrances. Mainstream Hurriyet reports that some of the lawyers complained that they were the targets of wire tapping, and the judge responded by saying his phone might be tapped as well. The Court denied some of the defendants' requests to be released at Thursday's hearing and postponed the hearing to October 27.

Economic Crisis

Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Vatan and others: Mainstream Sabah reports that during a press conference, PM Erdogan said that Turkey could turn global crisis into an opportunity and might overcome the crisis with the least damage. Erdogan added that stance of banks against real sector was not proper that banks were asking manufacturers to pay high interest rates or were pressing their clients to pay back their debts. Ahead of schedule. These are immoral attitudes. Sabah notes that the economy administration revealed emergency measures for coping with the crisis. Finance Minister Unakitan said that the government will make arrangements to offer convenient payment terms to the people with tax debts. Unakitan stressed that individuals will be able to pay their taxes in 18 month periods.

Editorial Commentary on Global Financial Crisis

Ibrahim Karagul of Yeni Safak writes: What happened to economic globalization? What happened to neoliberalism? This financial system is collapsing. Now the economy is so bad that the only choice for the U.S. and Europe is to throw trillions of dollars at the markets. The national deficit is so bad in the U.S. that the share for each American has risen to \$17,000. This means the Bush Doctrine is completely finished. The Anglo-American imperial spirit has resulted in a nightmare. There are three important developments to note - strategic investment is an issue of national security, there are expectations for hyper inflation in the U.S. in 2009, and the establishment of an international guardianship mechanism will prevent the U.S. economy from doing more damage to the world economy.

Obama Promises to Repair Damage to Relations with Turkey

All media outlets report on their front pages that Barack Obama's campaign website has outlined its new policy on Turkey. Mainstream Sabah writes, "Obama gives warm messages for Turkey on his website." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the headline, "Bush Pushed Turkey Away from the West," and reports "U.S. Democratic

Presidential candidate Barack Obama wants to repair the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Turkey." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the front-page banner headline "Bush Revived the PKK," and reports Obama's website says, "The Bush Administration's failed policies in Iraq further strengthened the PKK." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "If Obama is elected, he will repair relations with Turkey." In "We Will Win Turkey Back," mainstream Milliyet reports Obama promises, "Good and close relations with Turkey are in our nation's interests." Liberal Radikal reports, "Obama also called on the Iraqi Kurds to give a guarantee to Turkey against the PKK." Leftist Taraf notes, "this time he did not call Turkey an 'invader' in Cyprus, but rather defended efforts that seek the unification of Cyprus."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- PM Erdogan sues MHP leader Devlet Bahceli for insulting the PM during a speech in parliament.
- The AKP sets up a special commission to evaluate the Court's detailed ruling regarding the AKP closure case.
- Parliament's commission for human rights conducts inspections in

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Metris prison to probe allegations of torture that led to the death of inmate Engin Ceber.

International News

- Democratic Presidential Candidate Barack Obama expanded his national lead over Republican John McCain in the U.S presidential race to 12 points.
- Russian FM Lavrov criticizes the EU monitors for failing to pay attention to the Georgian troop movements.
- The Armenian foreign minister said he was optimistic about future ties with Turkey. WILSON